Our Message

Hassan Al-Banna

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

1. FOREWORD

We would like to clarify our goal and clearly set out our agenda to mankind, addressing to them our mission without any obscurity or ambiguity such that it appears 'brighter than the sun', 'clearer than the morning', and 'more radiant than the fullness of the day'.

2. VINDICATION

At the same time, we would like our people to know, and all Muslims are our people, that the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood is pure and unblemished . It has aspired to such heights of purity that it has transcended the limits of mere personal ambition: it has held material gain in contempt, abandoned all selfish impulses and goals, and gone forward on the path laid down by al-Haqq (SWT):

'Say you (Muhammad): 'This is may way: I invite unto Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (must also invite others unto Allah). glorified and exalted be Allah, I am not of the polytheists.' (Surah-Yusuf (12), ayah 108)

Thus We do not ask anything from the people; we make no monetary demands, nor do we seek any reward from them., we do not desire from them any recompense or thanks. Whatever recompense we obtain is in the hands of our Creator.

3. LOVE AND CARE

We also wish our people to know that we love them more than we love ourselves, we love to sacrifice, and to fulfil their greatness, even if this means that we are the ones who pay the price for their glory, their nobility, their religion, and their hopes. One thing alone has persuaded us to take this stance; it is the feeling which seizes our hearts, controls our emotions, keeps us from sleep, and brings us to tears. It is difficult, very difficult indeed, to see how our people are presently oppressed, and then to resign ourselves to this present state of affairs, to accept a submissive role, or altogether abandon everything in despair. For when we work for mankind in the path of Allah we work harder than we would for our own selves: My friends, rest assured we are for you and no one else, we shall never be against you at any time.

4. TO ALLAH BELONGS ALL VIRTUE AND OPEN-HANDEDNESS

We have not been bestowed with anything , nor do we think that we possess special qualities. We simply believe in what Allah (SWT) has said:

'Nay but Allah has conferred a favor upon you, that He has guided you to faith, if you indeed are sincere.' (Surah-al-Hujuraat (49), ayah 17)

We wish that our hearts be laid open to the eyes and ears of our people, so that our brethren may know that we only want good for them, we hold compassion towards them, and are willing to sacrifice ourselves for their welfare.

Do they find that they are overcome with grief for our current situation? Let it suffice that Allah alone knows this, that He alone is the guarantor of success, and that in His hands lie the keys to guide man's heart; whoever Allah guides will not be misled, and whoever Allah leads astray cannot be guided. He is our Guarantor and our protector. Isn't Allah sufficient for His servant ?

5. FOUR TYPES

All we wish of mankind is that he makes it clear as to which of these four categories he belongs (with regard to our call):

5.1. Mu'min (the Believer in it)

Any person who has faith in our mission, believes in what we say, approves of our principles, and sees therein some good in which his soul may find satisfaction and his heart be content, we invite him to join us immediately, to work with us so that the number of those who strive in Allah's way may increase and to strengthen the voice of this call by his participation. There is no meaning to faith unless it is accompanied by work, and no benefit in a doctrine which does not motivate its bearer to make it fruitful and to sacrifice himself for its sake. Such were the First Vanguards of this faith whose hearts were guided by Allah, such that they followed His Prophets, had faith in His revealed scriptures, and strove vehemently in His cause. On these people Allah will bestow a most generous

reward. Even though they will have the rewards of those who followed them, this will not decrease anything from the reward of the followers.

5.2. Mutaraddid (the Hesitant)

Anyone to whom the truth remains unclear, and does not see in our speech a glimpse of sincerity or good, is hesitant and wavering, so we leave him to his hesitancy. However we advise him to form close links with us, read about us sooner or later, study our writings, visit our branches, and become personally acquainted with our Brethren. In this way he will gain our confidence, if Allah wills. The attitude of the waverers among those who followed the apostles in former times was the same.

5.3. Naf'i (the Opportunist)

As for the person who will not help unless he knows that there is some profit and gain in it for him, we say: 'Less haste! We have no prize on offer except Allah's reward if you are sincere, and Paradise if He sees in you any good. As for us, we are unavailing and poor: our concern is to sacrifice whatever we have and to contribute whatever we possess. Our hope is in Allah's grace, for He is the best of protectors and the best of helpers.' If Allah removes the veil from his mind, and dispels the greed from his heart, he will know that Allah's reward is far better and more lasting, he will join Allah's battalion giving generously of all that he possesses. If it is otherwise, Allah is in no need of he who is unaware that to Allah belongs the first right over his body, his wealth, his portion in this world and the next, his life and his death. This was the same attitude that the people like him adopted; when they refused to give allegiance to the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) unless they were granted the supreme authority after him. His sole response (PBUH) was to inform them that:

'The earth is Allah's: he gives it as a heritage to whom He will of His slaves, and the (blessed) end is for the pious ones.' (Surah-al-An'aam (7), ayah 128)

5.4. Mutahaamil (the Prejudiced)

The individual who looks upon us with suspicion, harboring against us all sorts of doubts and misgivings, looks at us through dark glasses and talks about us only in terms of rancor and skepticism, remains entirely fixed in his arrogance, wrapped up in his doubts, and enveloped in his fantasies. On behalf of both of us, we pray that Allah opens our eyes to that which is right, allows us to follow it; to regard falsehood as falsehood, to keep us away from it; and to inspire both of us with guidance. Thus we invite him, if he accepts the invitation, summon him, if he responds to our call; and pray to Allah for him, for He, Glory unto Him, is the Sovereign of hope.

'Verily you (Muhammad) guide not whom you love, but Allah guides whom He wills.' (Surah-al-Qasas (28), ayah 56)

We shall, however, continue to love this individual and hope that he will come over to us and be convinced by our mission, for our only slogan is only from the guiding words of the Al-Mukhtaar (the Chosen One) (PBUH) who used to say:

'May Allah, forgive my people, for they do not know!'

We wish that people who fall into this category were united as one with us, for the time has come when the Muslim must pursue his goal and define his objective, working towards this objective until he attains it. As for misguided negligence, silly notions, heedless turns of mind, blind indecision and imitation: This is in not the way of the believer.

6. FULL DEVOTION

Besides this, we would like our people to know that he who comprehends this mission in all its aspects is the only one fit enough to respond to it, devoting to it all that may be demanded of him in terms of his person, wealth, time, and health:

'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight, are dearer to you than Allah and his Apostle, and striving hard and fighting in his way, then wait until Allah brings about His decision (torment); Allah guides not the people who are rebellious.' (Surah-at-Tauba (9), ayah 24)

For it is a mission which does not tolerate torn loyalties, since it's very nature is one of complete unity, and whosoever is prepared to accept it will live through it as it lives through him. Whosoever is too weak for this burden will be deprived of the reward of those who strive, and will remain behind with the backsliders and the idle. Thus Allah will replace him with others who will carry His call:

'Humble towards the believers and stern towards the unbelievers, fighting in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the blame of the blamers. That is the grace of Allah, which He bestows on whom He will.' (Surah-al-Maa'idah (5), 54)

7. CLARITY

We call mankind to accept a clear, well defined principle, which they acknowledge and are familiar with. They believe in it, and endorse its validity, they know that their salvation, prosperity, and peace of mind depend on it . A principle whose long lasting effect and suitability has been attested to by experience and the judgement of history.

8. TWO FAITHS

The difference between us and our people, although both of us agree on the same faith and principle, is that their faith is anaesthetized, lying dormant within their souls, one to which they do not wish to submit and act accordingly. Whereas it is a burning, blazing, intense faith fully awakened in the souls of the Muslim Brotherhood.

There is an amazing spiritual quality which we (Easterners) as well as others, perceive in our own souls; namely, that we believe in our ideology with a faith which, when we discuss it, leads people to believe that it will drive us to shatter mountains, to give up our persons and our wealth, bear misfortunes, and struggle against adversities until we triumph over it or it triumphs over us. Nevertheless, once the hurly burly of debate grows quiet, and the group breaks up and go their own separate ways, each individual forgets his faith and ignores his ideology, giving no thought to further its cause, nor urging himself to put forth the slightest effort on its behalf. In fact, he may carry this forgetfulness and negligence so far that he will even act against it, unwittingly or not. Don't you laugh in amazement when you see a man, thoughtful, active, and educated, within the space of two hours turn into an apostate among apostates, and a believer among believers?

This apathy, or forgetfulness, or negligence, or sleep, call it what you wish, has made us try to awaken this principle (the very same principle accepted by our people) within the souls of this beloved nation.

9. VARIOUS MISSIONS

I shall return to my first statement, and say that the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood is the preaching of a principle, for in the East and West today there are various missions, principles, ideologies, schools of thought, opinions and objectives all of which sow division and war within the minds and hearts of men. Each one of them is beautified by its adherents: each one has its own propaganda, its own followers, its own devotees, and its own disciples. They claim special benefits and qualities about it, making such exaggerated pretensions that will appear attractive, captivating, and striking to people.

10. PROPAGANDISTS

The propagandists of today are not like those of yesterday. They are educated, well equipped, and thoroughly trained specialists, particularly in the Western countries, where there are trained corps specializing in every ideology, clarifying its abstruse points, displaying its good features, and inventing new means and methods of disseminating this propaganda. They work out the easiest, most effortless and most convenient ways to convince and convert the minds of people.

11. THE METHODS

Similarly, the methods of propaganda today are not like those of yesterday. The propaganda of yesterday consisted of a verbal message given out at a speech or a meeting, or one written in a letter. Today, it consists of publications, magazines, newspapers, articles, plays, films, and radio broadcasts. All this has made it easy to influence the minds of people, both men and women, in their homes, places of business, factories and pasture lands.

It became necessary for the propagandists to perfect all these means so that their efforts may produce the desired effect.

Now why am I making this digression? I shall say once more that the world today is saturated with propaganda of all sorts: political, nationalist, patriotic, economic, military, and pacifist. So what is the call of the Muslim Brotherhood alongside this confused welter?

This will give me the chance to speak to you on two matters: first, the simple, positive framework of our mission; then, afterwards, our stand with respect to each and every one of these other movements.

Do not judge me too harshly for this digression: I decided to write as I speak, and to discuss my topic in this manner, without any false pretence or complexity. I simply wish people to understand me as I am, allowing my message to reach their minds devoid of any fancy ornament and decoration.

12. OUR ISLAM

Listen, Dear Brother: Our mission is one described most comprehensively by the term 'Islamic', though this word has a meaning broader than the narrow definition understood by most people. We believe that Islam is an all embracing concept regulating every aspect of life, prescribing for every one it concerns a solid and rigorous order. It does not stand helpless before life's problems, nor the steps that must be taken to reform mankind. Some people mistakenly understand that Islam is restricted to religious practices or spiritual exercises. Thus they limit their understanding to these narrow lines.

On the contrary we understand Islam broadly and comprehensively, regulating the affairs of men, in this world and the next. We do not indulge in this claim this nor extend upon it on the basis of our own prejudice; rather it is what we have understood from the Book of Allah and the lives of the early Muslims. If the reader wishes to understand the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood in a sense broader than the mere word 'Islamic', let him take the Qur'an and free himself of any preconceived ideas

and judgements. Only then will he understand what the Qur'an is about, and see in it the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Indeed, our mission is 'Islamic' in every sense of the word, so understand by it what you will, but remember your understanding is confined to the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of his Apostle, and the lives of the pious predecessors. Allah's Book is the foundation and the pillar of Islam, the Sunnah of His Apostle is the explanation and commentary to his Book, while the lives of the Pious Predecessors (Allah's grace be upon them) serve as practical models for those who want to carry out its commands and obey its teachings.

13. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE VARIOUS IDEOLOGIES

Our stance with respect to the different ideologies (of our time) that have arisen like a stormy sea, dividing men's hearts and throwing their minds into confusion will be is to compare them to our mission. Whatever is in accord with it is welcomed; but whatever clashes with it, we reject it . We believe that our mission is universal and all encompassing, but that does not mean that it turns its back on the beneficial aspects of any other mission, without familiarizing and consulting itself with regard to them.

14. PATRIOTISM

People are at times seduced by the appeal to patriotism, at other times by that of nationalism, especially in the East, where they are aware of the abuse that the colonial West directs against them, abuse which has injured their dignity, their honor, and their independence; as well as exploited their wealth and shed their blood; and wherever they are suffering under the Western yoke which has been forced upon them, they are trying to free themselves with whatever strength, resistance, opposition, and endurance they can muster. The tongues of their leaders have been given a free rein, a stream of newspapers has gushed forth, their writers, their lecturers, and their broadcasters, are all working in the name of patriotism and the majesty of nationalism.

This is all well and fine. However when you try to explain to the people (who are Muslims) that Islam is more complete, more pure, more lofty, and more noble than anything that can be found in Western speeches or European literature , they reject it and persist in imitating the latter blindly, claiming that Islam belongs in one category and this ideology in another. Some of them think that this is what splits the unity of the nation and weakens the solidarity of their youth

This mistaken notion is a danger to the Eastern nations from all aspects, and with this notion I would now like to turn to the stance of the Muslim Brotherhood and their mission: insofar as their attitude towards patriotism; the stance they approve of and desire for themselves, and are trying to convince the people to adopt with them.

14.1. Affection

If the advocates of patriotism mean love for one's homeland, attachment to it and sentiment and affection towards it, it is something anchored in the very nature of the soul, for one thing; it is prescribed by Islam; Bilaal, who sacrificed everything for the sake of his creed and his religion was the same Bilaal who uttered the following sentiments in the House of exile, longing for Mecca, in verses overflowing with affection and replete with sweetness:

'If only I could spend one more night In the valley (of Mecca), about me sweet smelling herbs and grass; Or if only I could come down some day to the waters of Majanna, And if Shama and Tafil shall ever rise up before me.'

The Apostle of Allah (PBUH) had listened to a description of Mecca by Usayyil, and his tears welled up in yearning for it. He said:'

'O Usayyil, let our hearts rest quietly.'

14.2. Freedom and Greatness

Or if they mean that it is necessary to make every effort to free the land from its ravagers, to defend its independence, and to instill the principles of freedom and greatness in the souls of its people then we are with them in this too. For Islam has greatly stressed this, as Allah (SWT) says:

'Greatness belongs to Allah, His Apostle, and the believers, but the Hypocrites do know not.' (Surah-al-Munaafiqun (63), ayah 8)

And He says:

'Allah will never grant to the unbelievers a way against the believers.' (Surah-al-Nisaa' (4), ayah 141)

14.3. Community

Or if they mean by 'patriotism' to reinforce the bonds which unite individuals within a given country, and to show them a way of utilizing this reinforcement for their best interests then we also in agree with them on this. For Islam regards this as a necessary religious duty, and its Prophet (PBUH) said:

'Be worshippers of Allah, and brothers.'

While the Noble Qur'an says:

'O ye who believe! Do not take as confidants those who are not of you ! they will not fail to cast disorder among you; they are pleased by what troubles you. Hatred has been revealed out of their mouths: what their breasts conceal is yet greater. We have made the signs clear to you, if

you would but under stand.' (Surah-aal-Imraan (3), ayah 118)

14.4. Conquest

Or if they mean by 'patriotism' the conquest of countries and sovereignty over the earth, Islam has already ordained that, and has sent out conquerors to carry out the most gracious and blessed of conquests. This is what He, the Almighty, says

'Fight them till there is no longer discord, and the religion is Allah's.' (Surah-al-Baqarah (2), ayah 193)

14.5. Factionalism

However if they mean by 'patriotism' the division of the nation into parties which engage in mutual throat cutting, hatred and reprehension, hurling accusations at one another, deceiving one another, and banding together to further their cause dictated by their desires, shaped by their personal motives and goals, and interpreted in accordance with their own selfish interests. Thus allowing the enemy to take advantage of this, encouraging this fire to blaze forth all the more fiercely, causing them to differ over the truth but be united on the false. Thus the enemy will prevent any communication or co-operation between the parties , but will allow them to communicate with him and to rally around him, such that they will only seek his company and those who associate with him. This type of patriotism is a forged one , which does no good neither for its advocates nor for people in general. Now you have already seen that we are on the side of those who call for patriotism, even those that do so ardently with respect to all it's sound concepts returning the goodness back to the country and its people. You have also seen that this extensive and wide ranging patriotism is nothing more than part of the Islamic teachings.

14.6. The Limits of Our Patriotism

The bone of contention between us and them is that while we define patriotism according to the creed of Islam, they define it according to territorial borders and geographical boundaries. For every region in which there is a Muslim saying: 'There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.', is our homeland, inviolable and sacred, demanding love, sincerity, and sincere effort for the sake of its welfare. All Muslims in these geographical regions are our people and brethren: we are concerned about them, and share their feelings and sensitivities. Advocates of patriotism alone are not like this, since all that concerns them lies within a specific and narrowly defined region of the earth. This obvious difference is manifested whenever any nation desires to expand itself at the expense of others, for we would not approve of this at the expense of any Muslim nation. We only seek power so that we may all share it. But the advocators of fanatical patriotism see problem in this; and as a result, bonds of amicable relationship are snapped, power is dispersed, and the enemy strikes out by pushing each one against the other

14.7. The Goal of Our Patriotism

This is one factor. The second is that those who are only patriots and nothing else seek for the most part to free their own country, and then afterwards to build up its strength materially, just as Europe is doing today. We, on the other hand, believe that the Muslim is duty bound to give up his life, his blood, and his wealth to carry out this trust, namely, to guide mankind by the light of Islam and to lift its banner high above the regions of the earth, without desiring thereby wealth, rank, or power over anyone, nor the enslavement of any nation. One should desire only Allah's Face and the world's happiness through His religion and the raising of His word. This is what spurred on the pious predecessors (Allah's grace be upon them!) to those saintly victories which astounded the world and went beyond anything history had known in all it's swiftness, justice, nobility, and virtue.

14.8. Unity

I would like to draw your attention to the glaring error in the leading figure who says: that acting on this principle would tear apart the unity of the nation, which is composed of different religious elements. Now Islam, which is the very religion of unity and equality, maintains the ties of unity so long as the people continue to work for good:

'Allah does not forbid you to deal with those who have not fought against you in religion and have not expelled you from your homes, with kindness and justice, for indeed Allah loves the just.' (Surah-al-Mumtahinah (60), ayah 8)

Now then, from what source could dissension spring?

Do you not now see exactly how much we are in agreement with the most ardent patriots regarding love of the country's well being, sincere struggle for the sake of its liberation, its welfare, and its progress. We do, and we support everyone who endeavors to secure this with sincerity. Even more, I want you to know that their endeavor, if it should result in freeing the homeland and restoring its glory, would only represent a step in the right direction for the Muslim Brotherhood. For after that, they still have to raise the flag of the Islamic homeland above all the remaining regions of the earth, unfurling the banner of the Qur'an everywhere.

15. NATIONALISM

And now I shall speak to you about our stance towards the principle of nationalism.

15.1. Honor

If by the principle of nationalism, they mean that the descendants should follow the footsteps of their ancestors on the ladder to honor and grandeur; in their exceptional ability and resolution; taking them as good examples, that the greatness of the forefathers is something they may be honored about, discovering bravery and magnanimity, then it is a worthy, fine goal which we encourage and advocate. Are we invigorating the ambitions of the present generation for any other reason than to spur them on to achieve past glories? Perhaps a clear directive for this may be seen in what the Apostle of Allah (PBUH) said:

'Men are like treasure troves: the best of them in pagan times are the best of them in Islam, if they but knew'

So you see that Islam does not deny the virtues and noble aspects of nationalism.

15.2. Political Community

Or if they mean by 'nationalism' that a man's kin and his nation are the most deserving out of all mankind for his love and devotion, and the most worthy of his favor and striving [jihad], then it is the truth, for who does not think that the most deserving of mankind for his efforts are his people, when he has been raised and grown up among them?

'By my life, a man's kin are greater in forbearance toward him, even if they mount him on all kinds of saddles.'

15.3. Discipline

If what is intended by 'nationalism' is that all of us are put to the test and held accountable to work and strive, it is up to every group to accomplish this goal in all its aspects. Until we eventually meet, Allah willing, in the forecourt of victory, and then this division will have been a good thing indeed Who is with us, to spur on the Eastern nations to form individual battalions, each one on its own battlefield, until we all gain the felicity of freedom and liberation?

All this is fine and great: It is not rejected by Islam which serves as the criterion, thus our hearts are open to receive it, and we urge all to accept it.

15.4. Fanaticism

If, however, what is meant by 'nationalism' is the revival of Pre Islamic customs which have been swept away, and distant memories that have been forgotten, while a successful civilization which has long been established is effaced, and it's Islamic ties dissolved by nationalistic propaganda and racial glorification, as some states have done, annihilating the characteristic traits of Islam and Arabism even down to personal names, the letters of the alphabet and the vocabulary, then this version of nationalism is reprehensible, destructive in its consequences and evil in its results, causing the East great loss, to forfeit its heritage, prestige and most intrinsic qualities of honor and nobility. But this will do no harm to the religion of Allah:

'And if you turn your backs, He will replace you with another people, and they will not be like you.' (Surah-Muhammad (47), ayah 38)

15.5. Aggression

If what is meant by 'nationalism' is racial self-aggrandizement to a degree which leads to the disparagement of Other races, aggression against them, and their victimization for the sake of one nation's glory and its continued existence, as preached for example by Germany and Italy (before and during the Second World War), as claimed by every nation which preaches its superiority over all others then this too is a reprehensible idea. It has no share in humanitarianism and means that the human race will liquidate itself for the sake of a delusion with no basis in fact and embodying not the slightest good.

15.6. Two Pillars

The Muslim Brotherhood do not believe in a nationalism containing these ideas or their like, nor do they advocate Pharaonism, Arabism, Phoenicianism, or Syrianism, or employ any of those epithets by which peoples rival. But they do believe in what the Apostle of Allah (PBUH), the Perfect Man, the most perfect teacher who has ever taught mankind the good, said:

'Allah has removed from you the arrogance of paganism and the vaunting of your ancestry: mankind springs from Adam, and Adam springs from dust. The Arab has no superiority over the non Arab except by virtue of his piety.'

How splendid this is, how fine and just! Mankind are of Adam, and therefore they are equals, and people vie with one another in their works, and it is their duty to be rivals in doing good. Two firm pillars, which, if human life were only built upon them, would lift mankind up to the highest heavens! Mankind are sprung from Adam, therefore they are brethren and it is their duty to co-operate with one another, to keep the peace among themselves, to deal mercifully with one another, to guide one another toward the good and to vie with one another in performing good works. It is their duty to strive zealously, each within his sphere, so that mankind may advance. Have you ever seen

humanity rise to heights loftier than this, or a teaching more excellent than this?

15.7. Characteristics of Arabism

Nevertheless, we are not denying that the various nations have their own distinct qualities and particular moral characters, for we know that every people has its own quality and its own share of excellence and moral fiber, and we know too that in this respect the various peoples differ from one another and vie with one another in excellence. We believe that in these respects Arabism possesses the fullest and most abundant share, but this does not mean that its peoples should seize upon these characteristics as a pretext for aggression. Rather, they should adopt them as a means of realizing the foremost task for which every people is responsible the renaissance of' humanity. Probably you will not find in all of history any one of the peoples of this earth who have grasped this concept as fully as did that Arabian battalion consisting of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH)

This is a digression demanded by the context of our discussion, but I would rather not continue in this vein, lest it take us too far afield. Hence I now return to our chief point of interest.

15.8. The Religious Bond

Now that you have learned all this, may Allah bless you, know that the Muslim Brotherhood regards mankind as divided into two camps vis a vis themselves: one, believing as they believe, in Allah's religion and His book, and in the mission of His Prophet and what he brought with him. These are attached to us by the most hallowed of bonds, the bonds of credal doctrine, which is to us holier than the bond of blood or of soil. These are our closest 'relatives' among the peoples: we feel sympathy toward them, we work on their behalf, we defend them and we sacrifice ourselves and our wealth for them in whatever land they may be, or from whatever origin they may spring. As for other people with whom we do not yet share this bond, we will be at peace with them as long as they refrain from aggression against us. We believe, however, that a bond does exist between us and them: the bond of our mission and that it is our duty to invite them to what we adhere to because it is the best that humanity has to offer, and to employ such ways and means to succeed in this mission as our faith has designated for that end. As for those of them who show hostility toward us, we shall repel their aggression by the most virtuous means through which such hostility may be repelled. If you wish to hear this authenticated by the Book of Allah, listen!

'The believers are none other than brothers; therefore make peace between your two brothers' (Surah-al-Hujuraat (49), ayah 10)

'Allah does not forbid you to deal with those who have not fought against you in religion, and have not expelled you from your homes, that you should treat them with kindness and justice, for indeed, Allah loves the just. He forbids you only those who fought against you in religion, and expelled you from your homes, and helped to expel you, that you should take them as friends' (Surah-al-Mumtahinah (60), ayah 8-9)

Perhaps through this, I have revealed to you an aspect of our mission which will not leave it ambiguous or enigmatic in your mind. And perhaps after this, you will know what kind of organization the Muslim Brotherhood is.

16. IN FACE OF RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

I will now speak to you on the subject of our mission with regard to religious differences and sectarian opinions.

16.1. Joining, Not Separating

Know first, may Allah enlighten you, that the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood is a general one unaffiliated with any particular sect, and that it does not favor a certain opinion known by a people to have a certain 'tint', or any preconceptions and conclusions. It addresses itself to the heart and core of religion, and we would like to see various interests and points of view unified so that our work may be more productive and our results greater and more significant. For the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood is pure and unsullied, unblemished by any stain, and it is on the side of truth wherever it may be found, warmly espousing unanimity and detesting deviance. The greatest trial from which Muslims have suffered has been that of separatism and disagreement, while the basis of all their victories has been love and unity. The last of this Ummah will prosper only through the same means as did the first: this is a fundamental principle and acknowledged goal to every Muslim Brother. It is an article of belief firmly anchored within our souls, we owe our origin to it, and we appeal to others to accept it.

16.2. Differences Are Inevitable

Withal, we believe that differences in the subordinate aspects of religion are absolutely unavoidable. It is impossible for us all to be united on these matters, opinions, and schools of thought for a number of reasons. Among these are differences of intellectual capacity to undertake profound investigation, or incapacity to do so; conscious grasp of rigorous proofs, or ignorance of them; and varying ability to penetrate into the depths of ideas and the interconnectedness of essential truths. Formal religion is contained in Qur'anic verses, Ahaadeeth and texts subject

to intellectual exposition and judgement within the bounds set by language and its rules, and on this score people are very much at odds and there is no escaping difference in opinion. Also among these factors are breadth and paucity of knowledge. One individual will have heard of something that another has not, and the next one will be in a similar predicament. Malik said to Abu Ja'far: 'The Companions of the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) have been scattered about in the various military settlements and each group has its store of knowledge. If you compel them to accept one opinion, there will be civil strife.'

Also among these factors are differences in environment, so that adaptation to each will differ according to the different nature of each environment. You will see Imam Ash-Shafi'i (May Allah reward him) delivering legal opinions according to the old circumstances of Iraq and according to his new opinions in Egypt. In each case he was acting in accord with what seemed perfectly clear and lucid to him; in neither case did he go beyond ferreting out the truth.

Another among these factors, is difference in the degree of inward confidence placed in a received tradition as it is promulgated; for while you may regard one particular narrator as authoritative, according to this particular imam, and feel quite satisfied with him, accepting him wholeheartedly, you may find him regarded as faulty by another imam, because of what he may know of his real circumstances.

Also among these factors are differences in the evaluation of religious proofs; for this will consider, for example, one will say that the course of action adopted by the people as a whole has priority over the welfare of one individual, while that one disagrees with him, and so forth.

16.3. Unanimity on Minor Details is Impossible

All these contributing factors have convinced us that unanimity on even a single question culled from the minor details of religion is a hopeless wish. Nay, it is even incompatible with the nature of religion, since Allah desires only that this religion last, survive, and endure for ages and aeons. It is for this reason easy, flexible, simple, and mild, without rigidity or severity.

16.4. We Excuse Those Who Differ With Us

We will try to find an excuse for those who differ with us regarding some minor matters. We feel that this difference will never be an obstacle to friendly relations, mutual esteem, and co-operation for the good; that the broad, sweeping concept of Islam will contain both us and them within its excellent bounds and capacious limits. Are we not Muslims as they are? Do we not wish to achieve peace of mind as they do? Do we not claim that we wish for our brethren what we wish for ourselves? In what way do we then differ ? Why should not our views be a subject for discussion among them, as their views are among us? Why should we not understand one another in an atmosphere of serenity and affection, where the instigation to mutual understanding exists?

The very Companions of the Apostle of Allah (PBUH) used to have differences of opinion, but did this create large differences between them? Or did it sunder or dissolve their solidarity? By Allah, no! There is nothing improbable in the tradition concerning the afternoon prayer among the Banu Quraydha.

If these men differed with one another even though they were, of all mankind, the closest in time to the Prophetic age and the most familiar with the context in which its precepts were revealed, who are we to cut one another to bits over trifling differences of no importance whatsoever? If the imams, who were the most erudite of mankind with respect to Allah 's Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet, differed and disputed with one another, why should we not be satisfied with what satisfied them? If differences arose concerning the most well known and unambiguous of detail, such as the call to prayer which is performed five times a day, with relevant texts and historical traditions being handed down in attestation, what have you to do with the fine points of such questions, which originate in learned discussion and painstaking research?

There is one more matter worth looking into. People used to have recourse to the Caliph and the law enforcement agency of the Imamate when they differed, and he would judge between them, and his decision would settle the dispute. Where is the Caliph these days? If this is the way matters stand, the best thing that Muslims can do is look for a qaadi (judge, scholar) and submit their case to him, since if they disagree without resorting to competent authority, it can only propel them into further disagreement.

The Muslim Brotherhood are acquainted with all these considerations, and are therefore the most forbearing of men with those who differ with them. They recognize that every people has some knowledge, and that there is some truth and falsehood in every call. They are keen to search out the truth and hold fast to it, and they try, with forbearance and sympathy, to satisfy those who disagree with their viewpoint. If they are satisfied, then well and good; and if they are not satisfied, they are still brethren in the faith, and we ask Allah's guidance for us and them.

This is the attitude of the Muslim Brotherhood visa vis their opponents on questions of minor details in Allah's religion. Perhaps I can summarize it for you by saying that the Brotherhood permit differences of opinion, detest fanaticism in outlook, and try to arrive at the truth and to convert men to it through the gentlest methods of forbearance and affection.

17. TO THE CURE

17.1. Diagnosis

Brother, know and learn that nations, in terms of their strength, weakness, youth, old age, health, and sickness, are like human individuals, without exception. For even when you look at a human being, strong, sound, and enjoying good health, you will see him at another moment in time, seized by illness and beleaguered by maladies. Ailments and pains undermine his strength, and he continues to complain and groan until Allah's mercy (SWT) overtakes him by the hands of a skilled physician and well trained specialist who knows the locus of the complaint and diagnoses it expertly, discovering the area of the infection and working with dedication to cure it. And lo and behold, after a time you will see the same patient with his strength returned and his health restored to him. He may even be in better condition after his treatment than before it. Imagine exactly the same situation with respect to nations: the changes of time confront them with threats to their very existence, breaking apart their solid structure while disease infiltrates the surface appearance of their strength. It continues to work away at them without interruption until it wreaks its damage upon them, and they turn out weak, the covetous eyeing them with greed, and the spoilers robbing them. They have no strength to repel the spoiler, and cannot ward off the greed of the covetous.

They can only be cured by these means: knowledge of the locus of the ailment, endurance to put up with the pain of the treatment, and an expert who will undertake it until Allah fulfils his will through his hands, and brings the cure to a successful conclusion.

17.2. The Symptoms

Experience has taught us, and events have given us the knowledge, that the disease afflicting these Eastern nations assumes a variety of aspects and has many symptoms. It has done harm to every aspect of their lives, for they have been assailed on the political side by imperialist aggression on the part of their enemies, and by factionalism, rivalry, division, and disunity on the part of their sons. They have been assailed on the economic side by the propagation of usurious practices throughout their social classes, and the exploitation of their resources and natural treasures by foreign companies. They have been afflicted on the intellectual side by anarchy, defection, and heresy which destroy their religious beliefs and overthrow the ideals within their sons' hearts. They have been assailed on the sociological side by lewdness of manners and morals, through the sloughing off of the restraints of the humanitarian virtues they inherited from their glorious, fortunate ancestors; while through imitation of the West, the viper's venom creeps insidiously into their affairs, poisoning their blood and sullying the purity of their well being. They have been assailed through the workings of a positive man-made law which does not restrain the criminal, chastise the assailant, or repel the unjust; nor does it even for one day take the place of the divinely revealed laws which the Creator of creation, the Master of the kingdom, and the Lord of souls and their Originator, has set down. They have been assailed also through disorder in their policy of education and training, which stands in the way of effectively guiding their present generation, the men of the future and those who will be responsible for bringing about their resurgence. They have been assailed on the spiritual side by a death dealing despair, a murderous apathy, a shameful cowardice, an ignoble humility, an all pervading impotence, a niggardliness and an egocentricity which prevent people from making any effort, preclude self-sacrifice, and thrust the nation from the ranks of earnest strivers into those of triflers and gamesters.

What hope is there for a nation against which all these factors, in their strongest manifestations and most extreme forms; imperialism and factionalism, usury and heresy and licentiousness, disorientation in education and legislation, foreign companies, despair and niggardliness, impotence and cowardice, and admiration for the enemy, an admiration which prompts one to imitate him in everything he does, especially his evil acts.

One of these diseases alone is sufficient to kill off numerous proud nations, and how much longer, now that it has spread among all, in every nation without exception? If it were not for the resistance, imperviousness, hardihood, and strength of those Eastern nations whose enemies have been contending with them and assiduously inoculating them with the germs of these diseases for a long time, until they finally imbedded themselves and hatched, if it were not for these qualities, their traces would have been long ago swept away and wiped out of existence. But Allah and the believers will not tolerate this.

Brother, this is the diagnosis which the Brotherhood make of the ailments of this Ummah, and this is what they are doing in order to cure it of them and to restore to it its lost health and strength.

17.3. Hopes and Feelings

Brother, I would like you to know, before I talk to you about these means, that we do not despair of ourselves, that we hope for a great good, and that we believe that only such despair stands between us and our success. For if hope grows strong within us, we shall arrive at this great good, Allah willing, and therefore we do not despair, nor does despair force its way into our hearts, Allah be praised!

Everything around us gives glad tidings of hope, despite the forebodings of pessimists. If you were to visit a sick person, and found him declining gradually from speech

to silence and from motion to immobility, you would feel that he is close to the end, that his cure would be a difficult matter, and that his disease was gaining ground. And if the reverse took place, and he began to move gradually from silence to speech, and from torpor to mobility, you would feel that he was close to being cured, and that he was making progress on the way to health and vitality. A period of time had come over these Eastern nations during which they had grown torpid, and inactive. But now they are seething with a waking consciousness is embracing all aspects of life, and they are flaring up with a vital and forceful awareness and sharpened sensibilities. If it were not for the weight of their shackles on the one hand, and their lack of direction on the other, this awareness would produce the most striking results. But these shackles shall not endure forever: time is change, and in the twinkling of an eye Allah changes things from one state to another. The directionlessness shall not remain so forever; guidance comes after bewilderment, and stability after anarchy, for Allah's is the command before and after! Therefore we never despair the verses of Allah (SWT), the Traditions of His Apostle (PBUH), His Sunnah (SWT) as regards the teaching of nations and the exaltation of peoples, and all He has related to us of these matters in His Book all of these proclaim an immense hope for us, and guide us toward the path of a genuine resurgence, for the Muslims know this if they have studied.

Just read the noble Qur'anic verses at the beginning of Surah-al-Qasas:

'Taa-Seen-Meem. These are the verses of the clear speaking Book. We shall relate to thee part of the story of Moses and Pharaoh in truth, to a believing people. Lo, Pharaoh was exalted in the earth and made its people into groups rendering weak a party among them, slaughtering their sons and keeping alive their women. Lo, he was of those who spread corruption. And We desired to show favor to those who had been rendered weak in the earth, and to make them leaders and to make them inheritors; and to make them strong in the earth, and to display through them, to Pharaoh and Haman and their soldiery, what they were guarding against' (Surah-al-Qasas (28), ayahs 1-6)

Read these noble verses and you will see how the vain one oppresses through his brutality and exults in his strength, satisfied with his tyrannical power and forgetful of the Eye which observes him. But just as he is rejoicing in his fortune, God seizes him with the grasp of the Mighty, the Powerful, for it is Allah's will invariably to succor the wrong and to help the downtrodden and those rendered weak. For the vein crumbles at its very foundation, but the truth is solidly built and firmly supported, and those who cling to it will be triumphant. After reading these noble Qur'anic verses and their like in the Unassailable Book, not one of the Islamic nations believing in Allah, His Apostle, and His Book, has any excuse to give way to despair and hopelessness. When will the Muslims apply themselves to God's Book?

For similar reasons brother, and there are many of such in Allah's religion the Muslim Brotherhood do not despair of Allah's succor being sent down to these nations, despite the difficulties which can be seen before them. In the light of this hope, they carry on the task of the earnest and the hopeful, for it is Allah of whom aid is sought!

As for the means which I promised you I would discuss, they are three basic principles about which the ideology of the Brotherhood revolves.

The proper program of action: The Brotherhood have found it in God's Book, the Sunnah of His Apostle, and the precepts of Islam, when the Muslims will understand these as they should be: fresh, pure, and far removed from the spurious and the untrue and when they devote themselves to the study of Islam on this basis, simply, broadly, and comprehensively.

Believing workers: For this reason the Brotherhood have taken it upon themselves to apply what they have understood of Allah's religion without indulgence or slackness. God be praised, they believe in their ideology, are satisfied as to its goal, and are confident that Allah will sustain them while they remain devoted to Him, and so they will forge ahead under the guidance of Allah's Apostle (PBUH).

A determined, trustworthy leadership: The Muslim Brotherhood have found their leadership to be of this character, and so they are obedient to it and work under its banner.

This, Dear brother is a summary of our mission. It is a general description which has a more in-depth explanation. A dream which has to be turned into reality and you are like the 'Joseph' of these dreams. If the path we are treading on appeals to you, place your hands on ours and join with us on this path. May Allah grant us success, for only on him do we depend. He is our best of trustee, protector and helper!

Allahu-akbar, wa lillahil-hamd.

Allah is Great and all praise is due to him.